



# Australian Bureau of Statistics

## 1370.0 - Measures of Australia's Progress, 2006 (Reissue)

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### ABS releases latest Measures of Australia's Progress

The 2006 edition of **Measures of Australia's Progress** (MAP) was released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) today. The third edition of this flagship ABS publication contributes to the national discussion about whether life in Australia is getting better.

MAP presents 14 headline dimensions of Australian progress that cover many of the areas of life most important to Australia and Australians. It presents indicators for these dimensions, allowing readers to make their own judgement about whether life in Australia is getting better.

Today's publication draws on ABS and other data to paint a picture of national progress. The publication updates and expands upon the previous issues of MAP.

MAP 2006 shows:

**Health:** During the past decade, Australian's health improved - children born in 2004 were expected to live two to three years longer than those born in 1994. Indigenous Australians, however, have a life expectancy that is considerably lower than other Australians.

**Education and Training:** During the past 10 years, the Australian population became more educated - between 1995 and 2005 the proportion of people aged 25-64 years with a vocational or higher education qualification rose from 46% to 58%.

**Work:** Since the last recession in the early 1990s the unemployment rate has continued to decline, and the annual average unemployment rate in 2005 was 5.1%.

**National income:** Australia experienced significant real income growth during the past decade. Between 1994-95 and 2004-05, real net national disposable income per capita grew by around 3.0% a year.

**Economic hardship:** Between 1994-95 to 2003-04 the real income of 'less well-off' Australians grew by 22%, as did the incomes of Australians in the 'middle' income group.

**National wealth:** National wealth, as measured in Australia's balance sheet, grew over the last decade. Real net worth per person increased by about 0.9% a year between 1995 and 2005.

**Productivity:** In recent years, Australia has experienced improved rates of productivity growth. During the decade 1994-95 to 2004-05, Australia's multifactor productivity rose 1.3% per year on average.

**The natural landscape:** Biodiversity cannot be measured comprehensively and up-to-date data are not available for some indicators. The available data suggests some decline in Australia's biodiversity in the past decade, partly encapsulated in a rise in the numbers of threatened bird and mammal species. Land clearance, one influence thought to be reducing biodiversity, may have mitigated the decline as it decreased by 38% between 1993 and 2003.

In 2000, about 5.7 million hectares of land were affected by, or at high risk of developing, dryland salinity, a widespread form of land degradation.

Detailed national time series data are not available, but a variety of partial evidence points to a decline in the quality of some of Australia's waterways. In 2000, about one-quarter of Australia's surface water management areas were classed as highly used or overused.

**The Air and atmosphere:** Australia's air remains relatively clean by the standards of other developed nations. The available indicators, such as the incidence of fine particle pollution in several cities, suggest that Australian air quality has improved during the past decade, despite increased motor vehicle use.

Australia's total net greenhouse gas emissions in 2003 were about 1% higher than they were in 1990. Per capita, we have one of the world's highest levels of greenhouse gas emissions, although our per capita emissions are decreasing, as are our emissions per \$ of GDP.

**Crime:** Though small, the changes in the prevalence rates for personal crimes between 1998 and 2005 showed an increase from 4.8% to 5.3%, the same level as 2002. Most of these people reported that they were assaulted. Between 1993 and 2005, the proportion of households that were the victim of a household crime (an actual or attempted break-in or motor vehicle theft) fell from 8.3% to 6.2%.

**Housing; Oceans and Estuaries; Family, Community and Social Cohesion; and Democracy, Governance and Citizenship:** While no headline indicators are presented for these four topics, each contains a commentary that discusses a range of information and indicators covering progress in each area.

MAP also includes an article on life satisfaction and measures of progress, plus an article comparing Australia's progress with that in other OECD countries.

Commentary that accompanies the indicators discusses trends in progress together with differences within Australia and factors influencing change. The aspects of national progress are linked with one another. Changes in one aspect will be associated with changes in many others - sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse.

Overall progress should not be assessed by simply counting the numbers of areas getting better and subtracting those getting worse. Some aspects of progress (e.g. national income and national wealth) are more easily summarised than other aspects (e.g. social and environmental).

Full details are found in **Measures of Australia's Progress** (cat. no. 1370.0).

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